

Mapping Cultural Values

Culture and identity are at the heart of the Ways of Being model. The relationship between cultural values and SEL skills is complex. Cultural values will often determine which social and emotional skills are most important for individual youth. Use this activity with staff to identify personal cultural values and preferences that influence social and emotional learning. This activity was developed with contributions from the SEL Community Design Team.

Why This Matters

- Cultural beliefs, values, and personal identity shape how each person defines success and quality of life.
- The social and emotional skills that are most important for youth to develop will vary based on their own understanding of success.
- Understanding how your own cultural background, values, and identity shape your social and emotional learning lens will equip you to identify SEL goals that may or may not be appropriate for youth in your program.

Getting Started

- **Materials:** Copies of Mapping Cultural Values
- **Time:** Allow at least 45 minutes to complete the Mapping Cultural Values activity and have a discussion.
- If you have a large group (more than 8 people), divide into small groups for discussion.

How To Use It

- 1) Give everyone 5-10 minutes to complete the Mapping Cultural Values activity. Reinforce that there are no right or wrong answers. Encourage participants to answer based on their own personal preferences, not the values of the program.
- 2) Once everyone has completed the map, lead a discussion using some of the questions below.
 - How are your cultural values and preferences similar or different from your peers?
 - How do your own SEL skills + your cultural values and preferences help you in life? How do they hold you back?
 - How might your cultural values and preferences be similar or different from the youth you work with?
 - How do your cultural values influence your definition of success in social and emotional learning?
- 3) Reflecting on just one cultural dimension at a time, discuss what SEL skills are most helpful on each end of the spectrum? Write these skills next to each dimension.
- 4) Consider how the cultural values and preferences of the staff impact your program.
 - What can you do to be more culturally responsive as you support social and emotional learning in your program?

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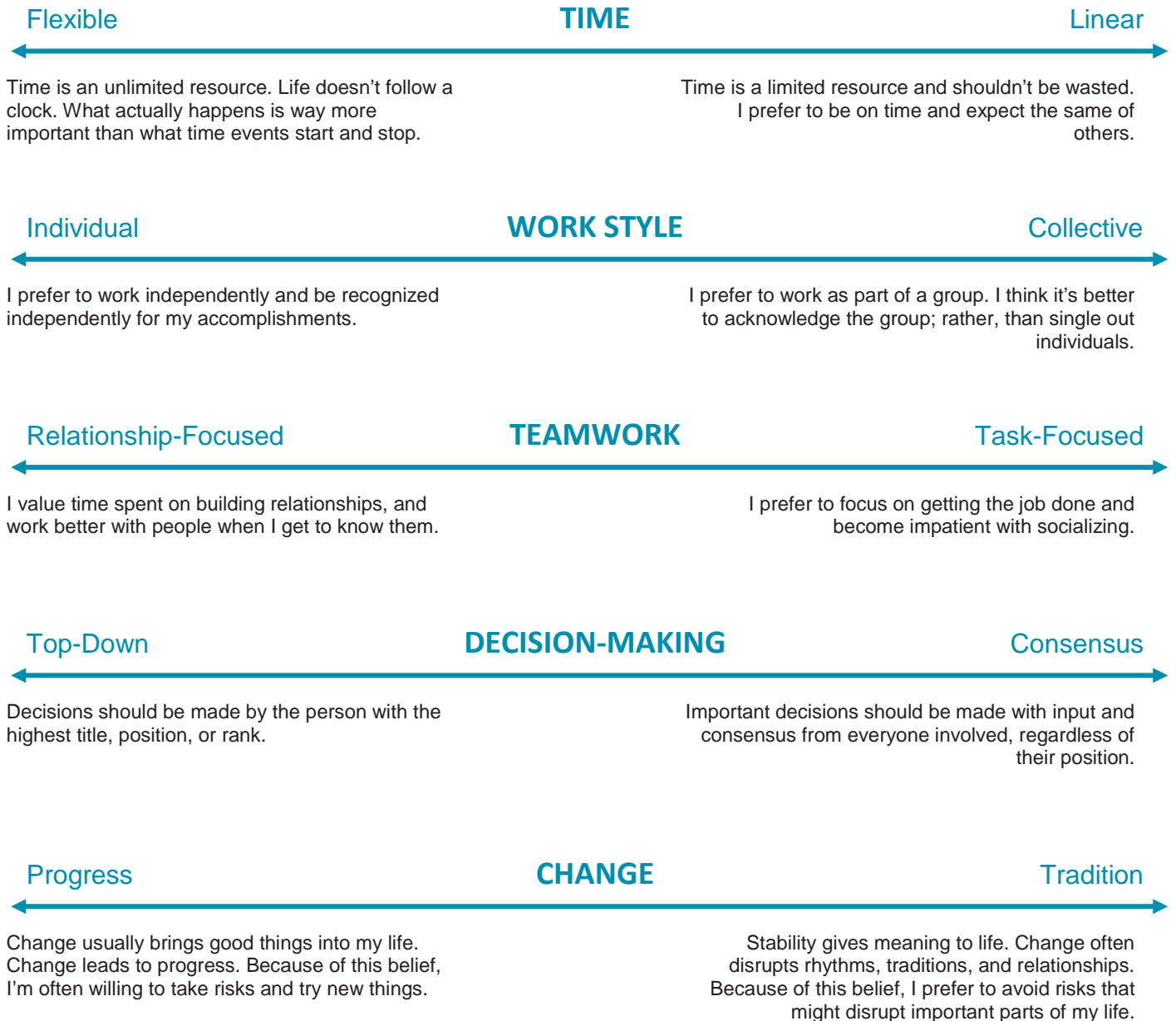
Take It Further

- As a group, complete the Mapping Cultural Values activity from the perspective of your program's values. Consider how staff and youths' personal cultural values are similar or different from program values.
- Review your **SEL+ Program Map** (or complete it for the first time). What cultural values are reflected in your SEL+ Program Map? How can you make changes to integrate the cultural values and preferences of youth into your program design?
- Have youth complete the Mapping Cultural Values activity. Invite them to consider what SEL skills are most important to them, given their values and definition of success.

The diagram illustrates five dimensions of culture, each represented by a horizontal double-headed arrow with labels at both ends and descriptive text in the middle.

- IDENTITY**: The arrow is labeled "Being" on the left and "Doing" on the right. The text in the middle states: "I derive more of my identity from who I am and who my family is. When I meet new people, I usually ask about who their family is and where they are from." on the left, and "I derive more of my identity from what I do for work, my hobbies, and my accomplishments. When I meet new people, I usually ask about their job and activities." on the right.
- CONTROL**: The arrow is labeled "Internal" on the left and "External" on the right. The text in the middle states: "What I do in life will shape my destiny. I can control my future. I don't understand why some people have a fatalistic attitude about their lives." on the left, and "My destiny is beyond my control. My fate is in the hands of others, such as my family, government, or a higher being. I don't understand why some people behave as if they can control destiny." on the right.
- EMOTIONS**: The arrow is labeled "Private" on the left and "Expressive" on the right. The text in the middle states: "It's better to restrain strong emotions." on the left, and "It's better to express emotions openly." on the right.
- COMMUNICATION**: The arrow is labeled "Low context" on the left and "High Context" on the right. The text in the middle states: "Good communication is sophisticated, nuanced, and layered. Some expectations are understood by everyone, so it's not necessary to spell everything out or put it in writing." on the left, and "Good communication is precise, simple, and explicit. All expectations should be clear, detailed, and put in writing." on the right.
- CONFLICT**: The arrow is labeled "Direct" on the left and "Indirect" on the right. The text in the middle states: "I bring up issues directly so problems can be solved quickly." on the left, and "I prefer to address differences indirectly to avoid upsetting anyone." on the right.

Tool: Mapping Cultural Values



Adapted from:
Meyer, E. (2014). The culture map: breaking through the invisible boundaries of global business. First edition. New York: PublicAffairs.
University of Washington Bothell. (n.d.). Mapping your cultural orientation. In Intercultural competence toolkit. Retrieved from
[http://www.uwb.edu/getattachment/globalinitiatives/resources/intercultural-competency-tool-kit-\(1\)/mapping-your-cultural-orientation.pdf](http://www.uwb.edu/getattachment/globalinitiatives/resources/intercultural-competency-tool-kit-(1)/mapping-your-cultural-orientation.pdf)